



Interview by Jemma Purdey and Ahmad Suaedy with Nophie Dewi, Bandung, 30 April 2014

PhD, Women's studies, Victoria University, 2010 cohort



[00:00:02]	In Australia from 2006 to 2010 doing a PhD with Katie Hughes in women's studies, research about long-distance mothering when Indonesian women are working overseas. Interviewed women and members of their families and communities in Anjur, West Java, Purwokerto, Central Java, Bandung and Jakarta. Annie Feith is a good friend, helped with the thesis, almost a co-supervisor.	Scholarship experience; Research topic; Friendships
[00:03:40]	Born in Bandung, father is from Purwokerto, Central Java, mother is from Jogja but was born in Bandung. Grew up in Bandung, graduated with a Bachelor of International Relations in 1996, then worked for a private bank for a few years before moving back to international relations. Worked for an International Labour Organisation project on child labour as a monitoring assistant in the footwear sector. Went to the University of Massachusetts as a research assistant from	Background; childhood; undergraduate; career experiences; international mobility and work

	2001 to 2003. Worked 20 hours a week and studied at reduced fees. Stayed in a Catholic boarding house with full board for \$200 a semester.	
[00:07:31]	While in Massachusetts did a Masters in Regional, Economic and Social Development, wrote her thesis on child labour in Bandung and why people prefer their children to work rather than go to school. Had research jobs in a range of centres e.g. Centre for community and work, Centre for women and work, researching the situation of immigrant workers. Had left her husband to go to the US, returned for three months to do fieldwork and husband went to America for Nophie's graduation.	Postgraduate degree in USA; International work experience
[00:10:32]	After graduating came back to Bandung and worked for Parahyangan Catholic University foundation to set up a scholarship office for the university. Applied for an ADS to do a PhD and was successful, but got pregnant so deferred the scholarship until 2005. Was in Jakarta when the Australian Embassy was bombed, doing some pre-scholarship training on the sixth floor two buildings from the embassy. Wasn't put off taking up the scholarship because had wanted to go to Australia after spending time in the embassy during her undergraduate years (1995 to 1996) researching Australian-Indonesian relations and the white Australia policy. Chose to	Career; Scholarships application; previous connection with Australia

	write about the relationship between Australia and Indonesia because it's so strange: love-hate, like pacaran.	
[00:15:01]	After returning from the US applied for scholarships in the US and UK but didn't get them so applied for an ADS. Went in 2006 with her little baby son, six or seven months old. Husband was a manager for the Catholic Church but left his job to go to Australia. Was in one of the last batches to get the ADS family stipend. Was accepted in ANU but heard it was very quiet and dry and there may not be anything for her husband to do so changed to VU in Melbourne. Wanted a woman supervisor and Katie Hughes had responded very quickly and seemed friendly.	Scholarships applications; Family accompanied to Australia
[00:17:36]	Had decided to do women's studies because was working with a small group, Jaringan Mitra Perempuan Bandung (JMP Bandung), that she had founded in 1996. Saw a need for work around gender and Jaringan Mitra Perempuan Bandung (JMP) Bandung did training about gender equality, domestic violence and dating violence with different communities, especially young people. Gender was a new issue, had discussions about whether to spell gender with a 'g' or 'j'. There were both women and men in the group.	Course selection
[00:20:19]	Wanted to do research about women and mothering, was just learning about parenting	Research topic; Indonesian community; family;

	<p>herself. Her husband was very supportive in Australia, volunteered to look after the baby. VU didn't have a lot of Indonesian students then but they met a lot of nice people, like Annie Feith. Katie Hughes had her office at the Footscray campus so they first lived in the student village, arranged by the liaison officer, but wasn't big enough for a family. Didn't know any Indonesians then, didn't think about that, just got on with what needed to be done. At first the ADS said she couldn't bring the baby, because they wanted her to settle in alone, but Nophie said she wouldn't go without her family and her husband would care for the baby.</p>	friendships
[00:23:54]	<p>Moved from the student village to a small apartment in Footscray and met some Indonesians. Felt Footscray was unsafe, her car was broken in to, so they moved to an apartment in Maidstone and liked it there. Then moved to a big house in St Albans where they were very happy and Nophie could have an office at VU's St Albans campus.</p>	Living in Australia
[00:26:37]	<p>Maternity leave: daughter born in 2008. Fieldwork in Indonesia in 2007 for three months before moving to St Albans. Discussion about maternity leave during the scholarship: possible but payments would stop during the leave. Husband had casual jobs but it wasn't enough to pay for everything without the scholarship money. Katie gave Nophie two weeks off</p>	Family

	without notifying ADS but the scholarship time was not extended.	
[00:31:13]	Postnatal support: had good support from a student advisor, helped with the writing. Student services were helpful, saw a counsellor that helped her manage mothering, studying and maintaining a good relationship with her husband. Husband was understanding and supportive. Daughter went to childcare on campus when she was four weeks old. The childcare centre was very good, nice staff, good food, discounted fees and the children were happy.	Family; student support
[00:34:30]	Library in Bandung: the childcare community donated books and toys for Nophie to set up a community library in Bandung. Ended up taking a 20-foot container of library materials back to Bandung, including 15 computers from VU via Katie Hughes. The library is in Kampong Suka Akur, not too far from Bandung, a crowded community where there is a lot of unemployment. Nophie used her own money and donations from friends to rent a house and ship the container.	Community work post-scholarship; Ongoing connection with Australia
[00:37:42]	Work and leisure: worked in the university library in St Albans, volunteered with the IWDA and Plan Australia. Also involved in the Catholic community in St Albans, a very multicultural community. Took the family	Living in Australia; recreation; community work in Australia; travel

	to Sydney, Adelaide and Brisbane when presenting papers at conferences and had little family holidays. Also kept weekends free for family activities. Having a car helped and ended up with a better car through an insurance pay out because the first one was written off when a rubbish truck hit it.	
[00:41:55]	Social life: quite a few friends from high school were working in Melbourne, found them on Facebook, so socialised with them. Also started the Indonesian Postgraduate Catholic Association in 2007 and got together, with 20 to 30 students and their families, once or twice a month in Box Hill and Richmond. Connected through Facebook and word of mouth. Was involved in the Indonesian Students Association at VU (VUISA), mostly postgraduate students, had a discussion once a month or so.	Socialising in Australia; Networks; Indonesian community in Australia
[00:45:32]	Other activities: Nophie's husband volunteered at the Indonesian Embassy preparing for the 2009 elections. She was also involved in some embassy activities like the Indonesian Festival and the Indonesian Film Festival. Annie Feith led a weekly yoga session and lunch for the postgraduate students when her office was in St Albans. Went women's studies and motherhood conferences at UQ and other universities. Now has funding to go to some conferences depending on where they are,	Indonesian community in Australia; international mobility

	sometimes goes to Singapore and Malaysia.	
[00:49:28]	Anak Arab: last time in Singapore, presented a paper about Anak Arab, children who are fathered while Indonesian women are working abroad but raised in the family and accepted by these women's husbands. Everyone knows but no-one wants to talk about this.	Post-scholarship research
[00:52:08]	Returned to Indonesia in 2010. Maintains friendships with people in Australia. Was accepted for a conference in Melbourne but didn't have funds to go. Chose to spend money on setting up the library rather than go to her own graduation.	Returning to Indonesia; networks and connections with Australia
[00:53:01]	Jendela Perempuan dan Anak: the library is a community centre with two volunteer staff. One does storytelling and program creation, the other organises the books. The books are taken to local schools and swapped each month. No borrowing facility yet. Storytelling is at the library and also in local schools. The library is usually open at least once a week and whenever the volunteer is there. Maintains a connection with the St Albans childcare centre through Facebook.	Community work; connection with Australia
[00:56:11]	Can still access online information from VU library as an alumnus for a fee, maybe \$50 for three years. Doesn't go to ADS alumni events because they're in Jakarta but is in touch and	Alumni networks

	involved in the ARG. Discussion about ARG funding for research and Ibu Inge Komardjaja's research in gender studies and disability studies.	
[00:59:40]	Son speaks English still but daughter was too young. They see photos of their life in Australia and want to go back to visit. Anecdote about St Albans house being burgled and laptop, handycam, piggy banks etc were stolen. No house insurance.	Family; ongoing connections with Australia
[01:02:06]	Experience of having daughter at Sunshine Hospital: risk of Down's Syndrome, elective caesar, felt pain killers were not strong enough, difficulty with breast feeding. Generally the experience was good. Made good friends from many countries, wanted to really live in Australia not just stay there.	Family; ongoing connections with Australia; friendships
[01:06:11]	Husband still struggling with work, went back to the same office as a contractor. On returning to Indonesia Nophie lectured one day a week but wanted full-time permanent work since husband's work not secure. In 2011 she got full-time work and now also works as a consultant for the government, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Canadian government. All projects have to be gender sensitive and they need gender specialists. IOM has funding from Australian Aid	Current work; international networks

	for the West Java disaster.	
[01:09:04]	END	